commitment to work together to find mutually satisfactory solutions to all outstanding issues. Two agreements were signed during the visit of the Bangladesh Prime Minister. These were : the Revised Trade Agreement and the Agreement for Mutual Cooperation for Preventing Illicit Trafficking in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances and Related Matters.

ii. The Third India-Bangladesh Joint Customs Group meeting was held in Dhaka on May 3-4, 2006. In the meeting, *inter alia,* it was decided to hold a Joint Assistant Commissioner Level meeting every month, a Joint Commissioner level every six months and a Joint Group of Customs meeting every year.

iii. The fourth meeting of India-Bangladesh Joint Working Group on Trade was held on July 5-6, 2006 at Agartala. During the meeting, a detailed discussion was held on the issue of Non-Tariff Barriers (NTB) and recommendation of the Task Forces set up by Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industries (FICCI) and Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industries (FBCCI) on promotion of bilateral trade. Both sides agreed that the recommendations should be examined for further necessary action.

iv. The third meeting of Joint Boundary Working Group (JBWG) was held on July 16-17, 2006 at Dhaka. During the meeting, the two sides exchanged views on all outstanding boundary issues in a frank and constructive manner. Both sides agreed to make every effort with a view to resolving all outstanding boundary issues at the earliest. Accordingly, it was agreed to hold the meeting of JBWG on an annual basis. The Two sides also agreed to schedule a joint visit to enclaves and territories under adverse possession, both in India and Bangladesh.

Non-Participation of Hurriyat Leaders in Talks

†914. SHRI DHARAM PAL SABHARWAL: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Hurriyat and many political parties did not participate in the talks organized by the Prime Minister on 24-25 May, 2006 in Srinagar to establish peace in Jammu and Kashmir;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the plea given by the parties for not participating in the said talks; and

(d) the reaction of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI SHRIPRAKASH JAISWAL): (a) to (c) The mainstream national political parties, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Ladakh Union Territory Front (LUTF) did not participate in the Round Table Conference (RTC) called by the Prime Minister in Srinagar in May 2006. All other mainstream political parties and organisations participated in the meeting. The immediate reason advanced by BJP for refusing to participate was Government's alleged failure in preventing the massacres of minorities in Doda and Udhampur on April 30/May 1, 2006. LUTF's reason for staying away was, among other things, the feeling that the people of Ladakh were being ignored in matters concerning resolution of the problems faced by the State.

The separatist organisations such as Hurriyat Conference (Mirwaiz Group), Hurriyat Conference (Geelani), Democratic Freedom Party (Shabir Shah), Democratic Liberation Party (Hashim Qureshi), Yasin Malik (Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front) and Sajjad Lone (People's Conference Sajjad) were invited to attend the conference but did not participate.

APHC (Mirwaiz Group) maintained that they did not want to share a platform with those mainstream political parties who did not consider the State's accession to the Union of India as disputed. The hardline faction of Hurriyat headed by SAS Geelani stated that it was of no use to participate until Government of India accepted the disputed status of Jammu and Kashmir. Shabir Shah (Democratic Freedom Party) boycotted the meeting on the ground that the Government of India had no clear policy on the State. Hashim Qureshi and Sajjad Lone said that Government of India was not taking practical steps for normalizing the situation in the State whereas Yasin Malik said that these conferences were meaningless.

(d) Government is committed to carry forward the dialogue process for resolving the existing problems faced by the people of Jammu and Kashmir. Prime Minister expressed the hope at the meeting that those who had stayed away from the conference would join the dialogue process at appropriate time, so that they could share their views with all of us.